

# The development of mirative *no wonder*-constructions

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# Introduction

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- in Present Day English strings like *no doubt*, *no question*, *no wonder* and *no way* mainly used as **modal**, **polar** and **mirative** qualifications of propositions:
- **grammaticalized** cxns with mirative *no wonder*:
  - **clause** modifying proposition:  
*His parents never allowed him to win a battle. **It was no wonder that** he was filled with rage and hate.* (WB)
  - **adverbial** modifying proposition:  
*The relatives were very annoyed, **no wonder**, and it caused friction in the family and we lost touch* (WB)

# Introduction

- **different lexical source constructions** of noun + proposition
- *question* + complement clause (Davidse & De Wolf 2012)  
After this were there **certaine questions** among his councell proponed, whether the king needed in this case to have any scruple at all, and if he had, what way were best to be taken to deliver him of it. (HC, 1500-1570)
- *way* + relative clause (Saad, Parmentier, Brems, Davidse, Van linden 2012)  
*a waye where manye wayes doe meete* (OED, 1585)
- *wonder*: constituent in copular clause  
*his **wundra** wæs sum ðæt sum mon sealde oprum scilling seolfres to borge.*  
'and one of his wonders was that a certain man gave to another a silver shilling as a loan.' (YCOE)

# Introduction

- role of **negation** in **grammaticalization process** in
  - (1) delexicalization/generalization of meaning?
  - (1) constructional persistence (Breban 2009) and crystallization (Traugott 2007)?
  - (2) rhetorical/discourse strategies (Waltereit 2012)?
- grzd uses with **wonder** distinctive in that
  - (1) very early occurrence of delexicalized/grzd uses
  - (2) crystallization of early structural variety
  - (3) discourse strategy: **justification** of mirative qualification

# Introduction

- rhetorical elements of mirative cxns:
- proposition
- **mirative qualification**
- **justification** (optional)

***it is no wonder** he should love you, you are so pretty*  
(CLMETEV)

*That Martin Hobbs is a bundle of nerves. And **no wonder** with  
the life he's led.* (WB)

*He [the great Captain] fights for me, and then **it is no wonder**  
that I come off more than conqueror* (CLMETEV)

# Introduction: structure of paper

- 1. Data
- 2. **Diachronic** development
- 3. **Synchronic** situation
- 4. Conclusions



# 1. Data



# 1. Data

- **Diachrony**
- exhaustive extraction of all tokens with *wonder*
  - YCOE (750-1150; 1,450,376 words): 788 tokens
  - PPCME 2 (1150-1500; 1,155,965 words): 229 tokens
  - PPCEME (1500-1710; 1,794,010 words): 97 tokens
  - CLMETEV (1710-1920; 15,013,400 words): 905 tokens  
(of which 414 with mirative meaning)
- **Synchrony**
  - WordBanksOnline (1972-2004; 550 000 000 words):  
random sample: 500 tokens of *no wonder*  
(of which 481 with mirative meaning)



## **2. Diachronic development**



## **2.1. Old English**

## 2.1. Developments in Old English

- YCOE data: 76 examples in which *wonder* is related to proposition
- **lexical** uses (8 %) vs. **grammaticalized** mirative clausal markers
- lexical use:  
*þat areste wundor wæs þæt þreo tungolcræftegan comon fram eastdæles mægðum to Criste þa þa he wæs cild, ond him mon brohte gold to gefe*  
'the first wonder was that there came three astrologers from a people of the East to Christ when he was a child, and they brought him gold as a gift.' (YCOE 850-950)

## 2.1. Developments in Old English

- **grammaticalized** mirative clausal markers (92%):  
2 multi-clausal patterns: **complementation** vs. **clause combining**
- **1. mirative copular markers** with (typically) **PPI** + **complement** clause  
*Micle mare wundor is þæt he wolde beon mann on þisum life, and alysan us þurh hine, þone þa wundra wæron þe he worhte betwux mannum.*  
'It is a much greater wonder that he wanted to be a human in this life, and redeem us through him(self), than were the wonders that he produced among humans.' (YCOE 950-1050)
- **2. clause combining** with mirative marker with **NPI** as 2ary clause  
*þanon he welt þam geweardeðerum ealle gesceaftu. Nis nan wundor,*  
*forþam ðe he is cyning & dryhten & æwelm & fruma & æ & wisdom rihtwis dema*  
'Henceforth he rules all creation with reins. It is no wonder, for he is the king, the lord, the beginning, the creator, the law, wisdom, and the righteous ruler.' (YCOE 850-950)

## 2.1. Developments in Old English

- 1. mirative copular marker with **complement** clause
- polarity items (PI):
  - Positive predominant:** 32 tokens: realized by:  $\emptyset$ , *much*, *more*, (exclamative) *which*
  - Negative:** 21 tokens: realized by *ne + nan(y)*, (rhetorical) *which*/ $\emptyset$
- structural variation:  
several types of copular matrix

## 2.1. Developments in Old English

- Pos (32 tokens):
- realized by:  $\emptyset$ , *much*, *more*, (exclamative) *which*

*Hwylc wundor is þæt forðon þæt þa mihten beon martyras*  
'What (a) wonder is it, therefore, that they can be martyrs!'  
(YCOE 850-950)

*And la hwilc wundor is þeah þe to life arise an mann þurh hyne*

'And lo! What wonder is it that one man [i.e. Lazarus] arises to life through him [i.e. Jesus]!' (YCOE 950-1050)

## 2.1. Developments in Old English

- Neg (21 tokens): realized by *ne* + *nan(y)*, (rhetorical) *which/ø*

*Nu cwæð se halga Beda þe ðas boc gedihte, þæt **hit nan wundor nys**, þæt se halga cynincg untrumnyse gehæle **nu he on heofonum leofað***

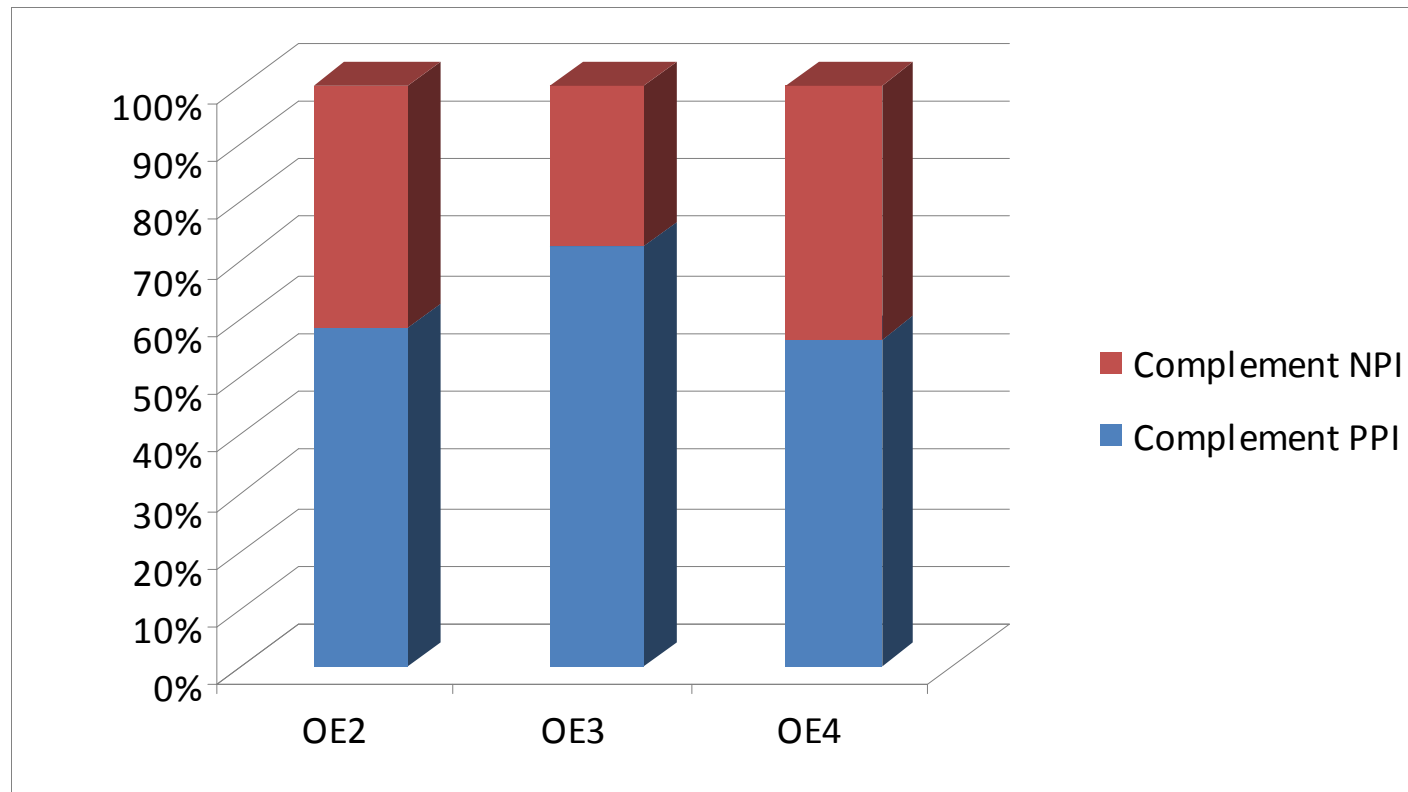
'Now said Bede the Holy, who wrote the book, that it is no wonder that the holy king heals weaknesses now that he lives in heaven.'  
(YCOE 950-1050)

*Efne þu gesihst þone mannan beforan ðe, ac on þære tide þe ðu his **neb gesihst þu ne gesihst na his hricg.... Hwilc wunder is gif se ælmihtiga God is, unasecgendlic, & unbefangennlic.***

'Likewise you see the man before you, but at the time that you see his nose, you don't see his back. ... What wonder is it that the almighty God is undescribable and unintelligible.' (YCOE 950-1050)



# Development of polarity within complementation structures: OE



## 2.1. Developments in Old English

- structural variation
- **predominance**
  - of subjectless matrix (36%)

***Mare wundor is þæt*** *God ælmihti, ælce dæg fet ealne middaneard & gewissað þa godan, þone ...*

'It is a greater wonder that God almighty sustains the whole middle-earth every day and guides the good one(s), than ...' (YCOE 950-1050)

- of matrix with cataphoric *that* (42%)

***þæt is wundor***, *þæt ðu ræðe forhæfdnisse hearde habban wilt* 'That is a wonder, that you want to have fierce and harsh abstinence.'  
(YCOE 850-950)

## 2.1. Developments in Old English

- smaller fraction:

- matrix with *it* (18%) → “extraposition construction”

***Full mycel wundor hit wæs þæt þæt mæden gebær cild þe næfre nahte  
burh hæmedþing weres gemanan***

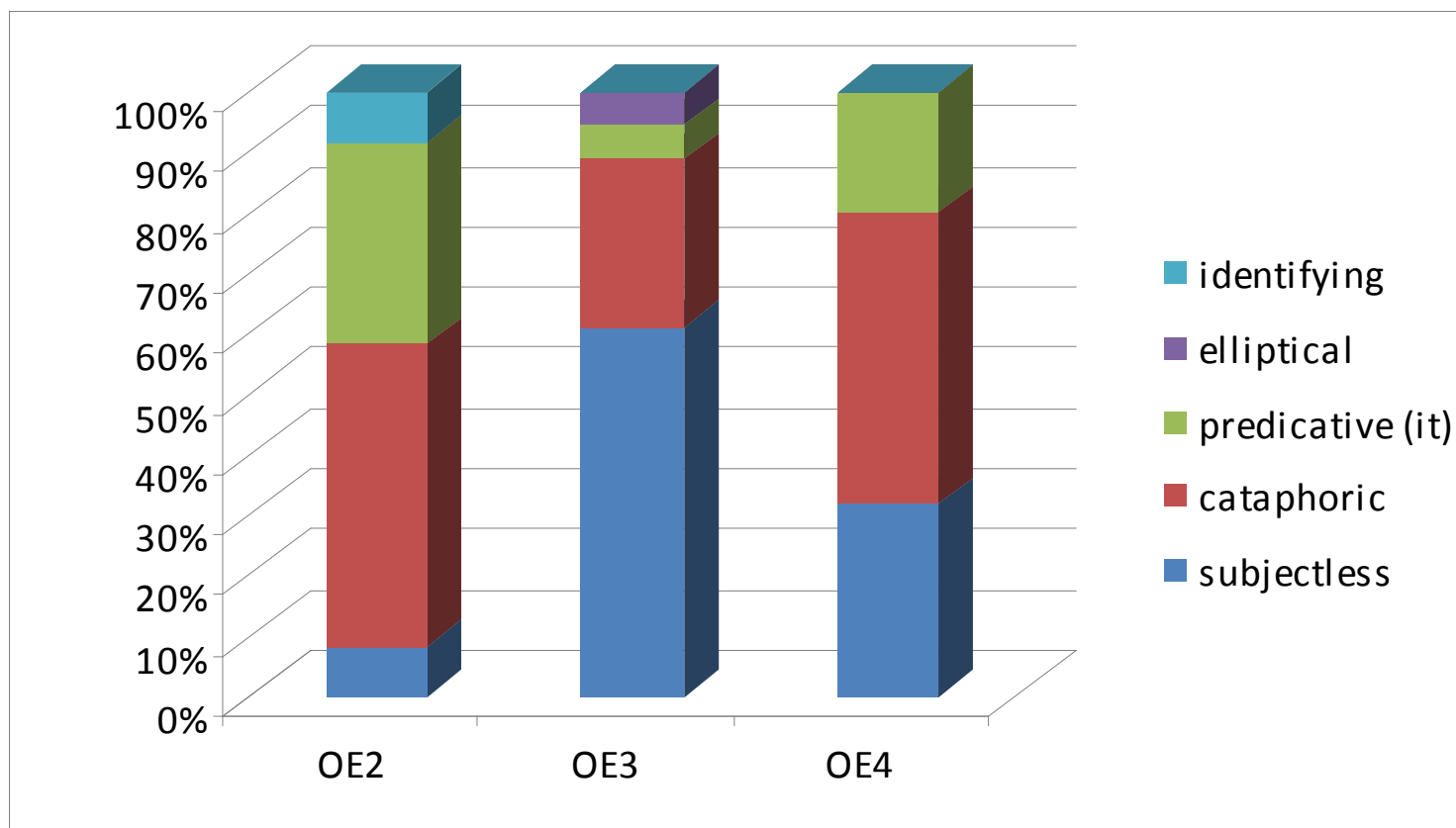
*'It was a very great wonder that that maiden, who never had intercourse  
with a man through cohabitation, bore a child.'* (YCOE 1050-1150)

- also elliptical matrix + complement clause (2%)

***Micel wunder þæt hit wearð gesyne on ðam lichaman, þæt þæt seo sawul  
underfeng***

*'Great wonder that it was seen on the body, that what the soul received.'*  
(YCOE 950-1050)

# Structural variants of complementation structures in OE



## 2.1. Developments in Old English

- **2. clause combining** with mirative marker with **NPI** as 2ary clause
- PI (polarity items):  
only **negative**  
(in contrast with complementation structures)
- Structural variation
  - (i) **intersentential parataxis** with mirative marker as 2nd coordinate
  - (ii) **hypotaxis** with mirative marker as **main clause**
  - (iii) **hypotaxis** with mirative marker as **subclause**

## 2.1. Developments in Old English

- **PI** in 2ary mirative clause in intersentential **parataxis**

- Neg: realized by *n(e) + nan*

& cwæð: Hwæt, ealle men hæfdon gelicne fruman, forþam hi ealle coman of anum fæder & of anre meder, & ealle hi beoð git gelice acennede. **Nis þæt nan wundor,** *forþam þe an God is fæder eallra gesceafta forþam he ealle gesceop & ealra welt.*

'He said: Lo! All men had the same origin, because they all came from one father and one mother, and all are born in the same way. (And) it is no wonder, since one God is the father of all creatures, for he created all and rules all.' (YCOE 850-950)

## 2.1. Developments in Old English

### - Structural variation within clause-combining

#### (i) Intersentential parataxis

& cwæð: Hwæt, ealle men hæfdon gelicne fruman, forþam hi ealle coman of anum fæder & of anre meder, & ealle hi beoð git gelice acennede. **Nis þæt nan wundor,** forþam þe an God is fæder eallra gesceafta forþam he ealle gesceop & ealra welt. (YCOE 850-950)

'& said: What! All men had the same origin, because they all came from one father and from one mother, and they all are still born the same. That's no wonder, because one God is the Father of all creatures, because he created all and rules all.'

#### (ii) Hypotaxis: mirative clause = matrix

Ac gif we asmeagap þa eadmodlican dæda þa þe he worhte, þonne **ne þincþ us þæt nan wundor**

'And if we consider the respectful deeds he did, then it does not seem any wonder to us.' (YCOE 950-1050)

## 2.1. Developments in Old English

- Structural variation of clause-combining

### (iii) Hypotactic: mirative clause = subclause

Wæs he gefeonde, ***swa hit nænig wundor is***, denunge fota  
*ðara ðe he swa micelre tide benumen wæs*

'Was he rejoicing, as it is no wonder, at the service of the feet, which he was deprived of for such a long time.' (YCOE 850-950)



## 2.1. Developments in Old English

Summary of mirative marking in OE:

- 78.6 % **complementation** structures:
  - matrices without subject and with cataphoric *that* predominate
  - predominance of PPI
- 21.4 % **clause combining** patterns:
  - intersentential parataxis predominates
  - only NPI
- no adverbials, no theticals



# Middle and Modern English

# Developments Middle & Modern English

- 1. **major overhauls** in **complementation** structures:
- 1. *reduction/crystallization* of structural variation towards:

predicative *it* matrix with **NPI** → ‘**extraposition**’  
*it's no wonder* + complement clause

and its elliptical form *no wonder that/if/though*

- 2. *specialization* for **negative** pattern

# Developments Middle & Modern English

- typical development of 'extraposition' cxn (Van linden 2012, Visser 1970, Mitchell 1985)
- origin in subjectless clauses with *be* in Old English + complement clause  
*Mare wundor is tat ...* (YCOE 850-950)  
*is micel niedðearf ðaet ...* (YCOE 850-950)
- subjects *that, it, there* inserted later (subject became obligatory)  
*It is (no) wonder that*  
*There is (no) need that/to*
- similar pattern with possessive matrix  
*I have no wonder/need/doubt/question that*

# Developments Middle & Modern English

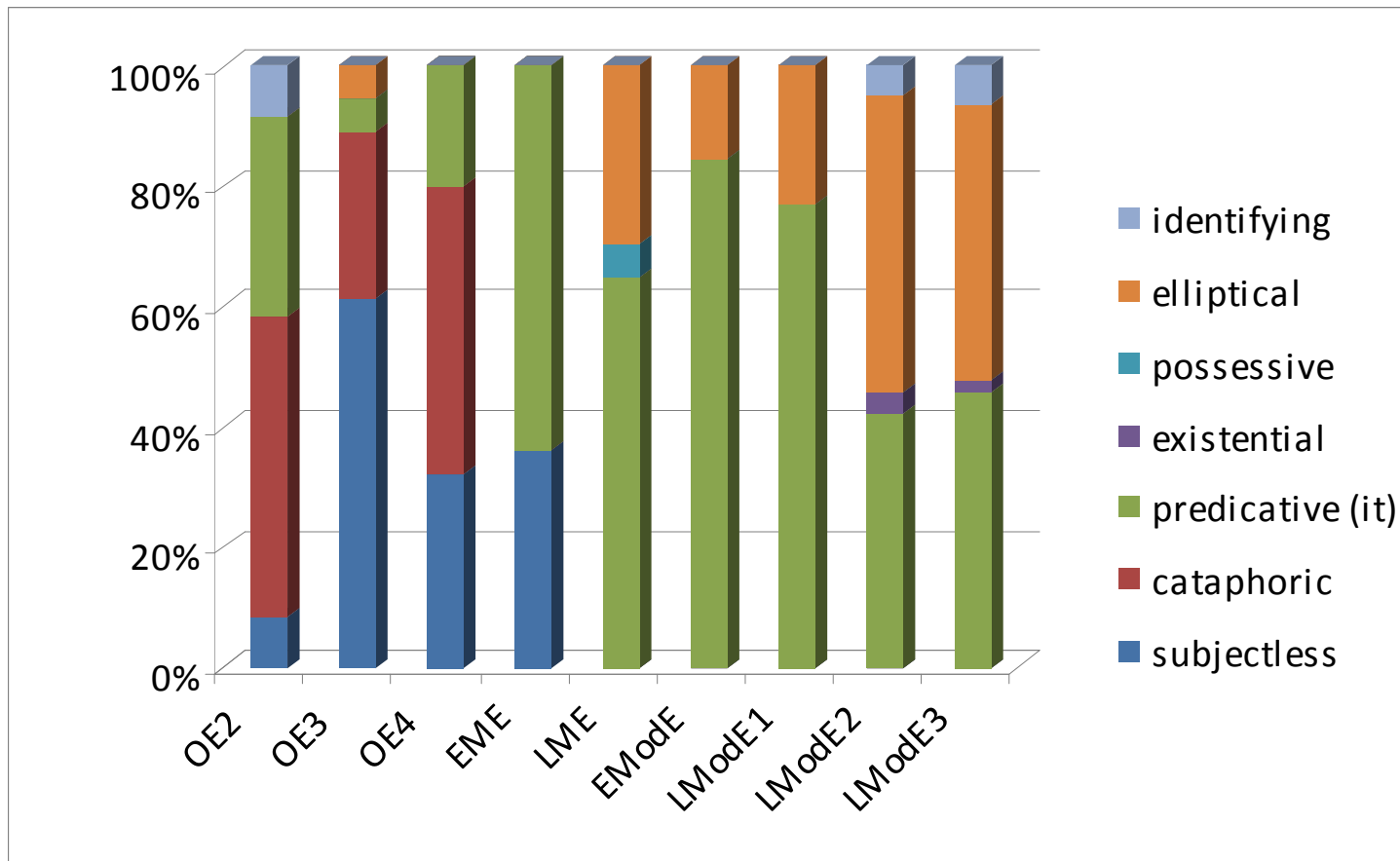
- predominance of
- predicative *it* matrix with NPI → ‘extraposition’

*It is no wonder, quoth she, if any thing rash & confounded be beleuid when orders reason is vnknown* (1570-1640)

- elliptical form *no wonder that/if/though*

*if þe irþe tremble and quake, what wundur þey þu tremble?*  
(1420-1450)

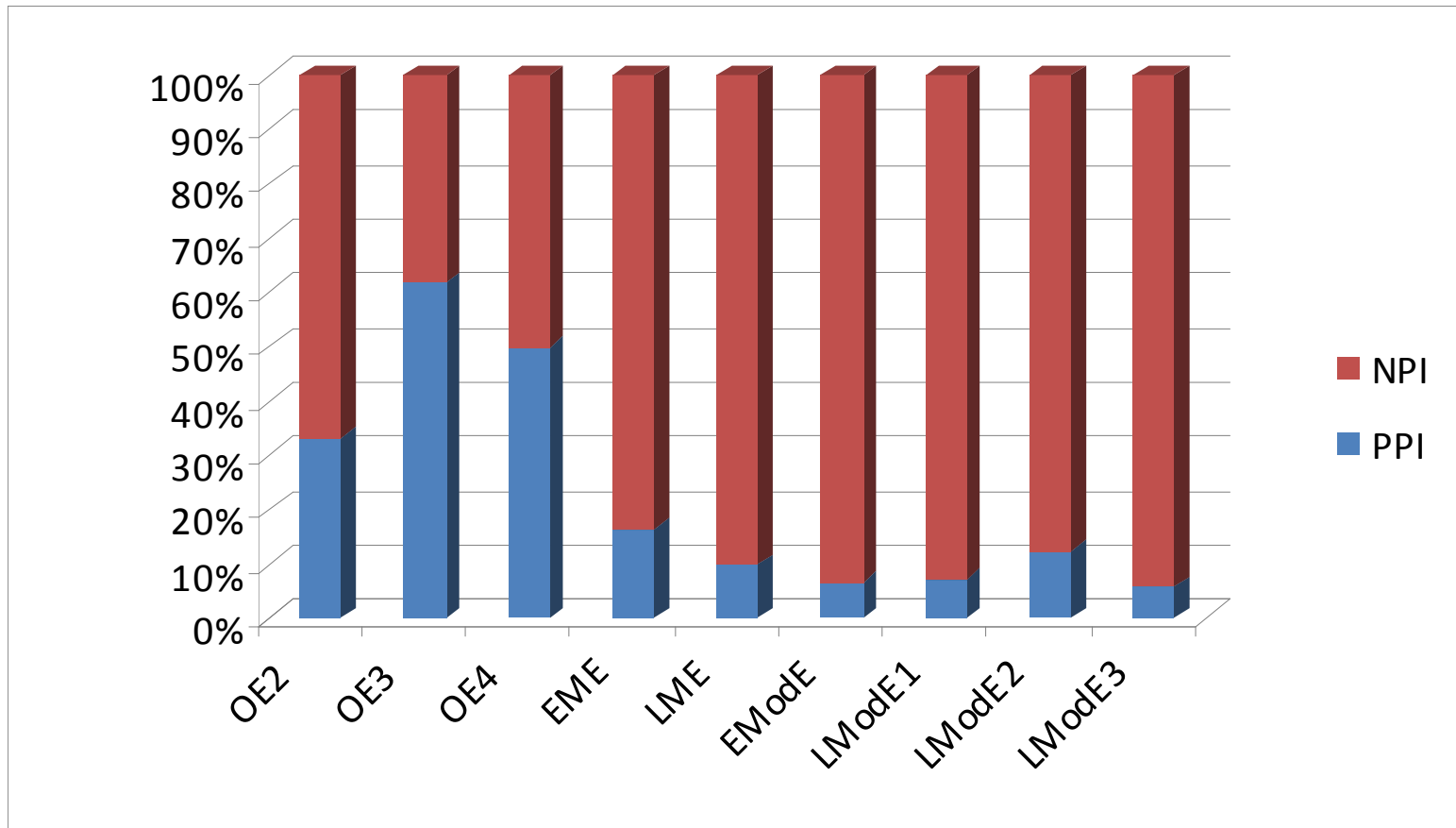
# Development of structural variation within complementation structures: ME & ModE



# Developments Middle & Modern English

- specialization for **negative** pattern
- in EME: strong reduction of proportion **PPI**
- in ME and ModE: **NPI** on average 95%

# Development of polarity within complementation structures: ME & ModE





# Developments Middle and Modern English

- 2. *Structural diversification* within **clause combining**
- besides hypotaxis and intersentential parataxis, emergence of **intrasentential parataxis**
- for ye knowe wel that I am angrey and wrooth, and *that is no wonder* (1350-1420)

# Developments Middle and Modern English

- 3. *Emergence of **adverbials** taking over* discourse functions of clause combining patterns
  - **functional trade-off** between **clause combining** and **adverbial** patterns
  - occur in same tactic patterns
  - serve same rhetorical strategies
  - take over 'proportional' share of clause combining patterns within mirative constructions

# Developments Middle and Modern English

- intersentential

*You're a wicked woman, that's certain, said I; and if you thought any thing of another world, could not talk thus. **But no wonder!**--*It shews what hands I'm got into!*— (1710-1780)*

- intrasentential

*We all know what came of it, and no wonder the Doctor objected to it* (1850-1920)

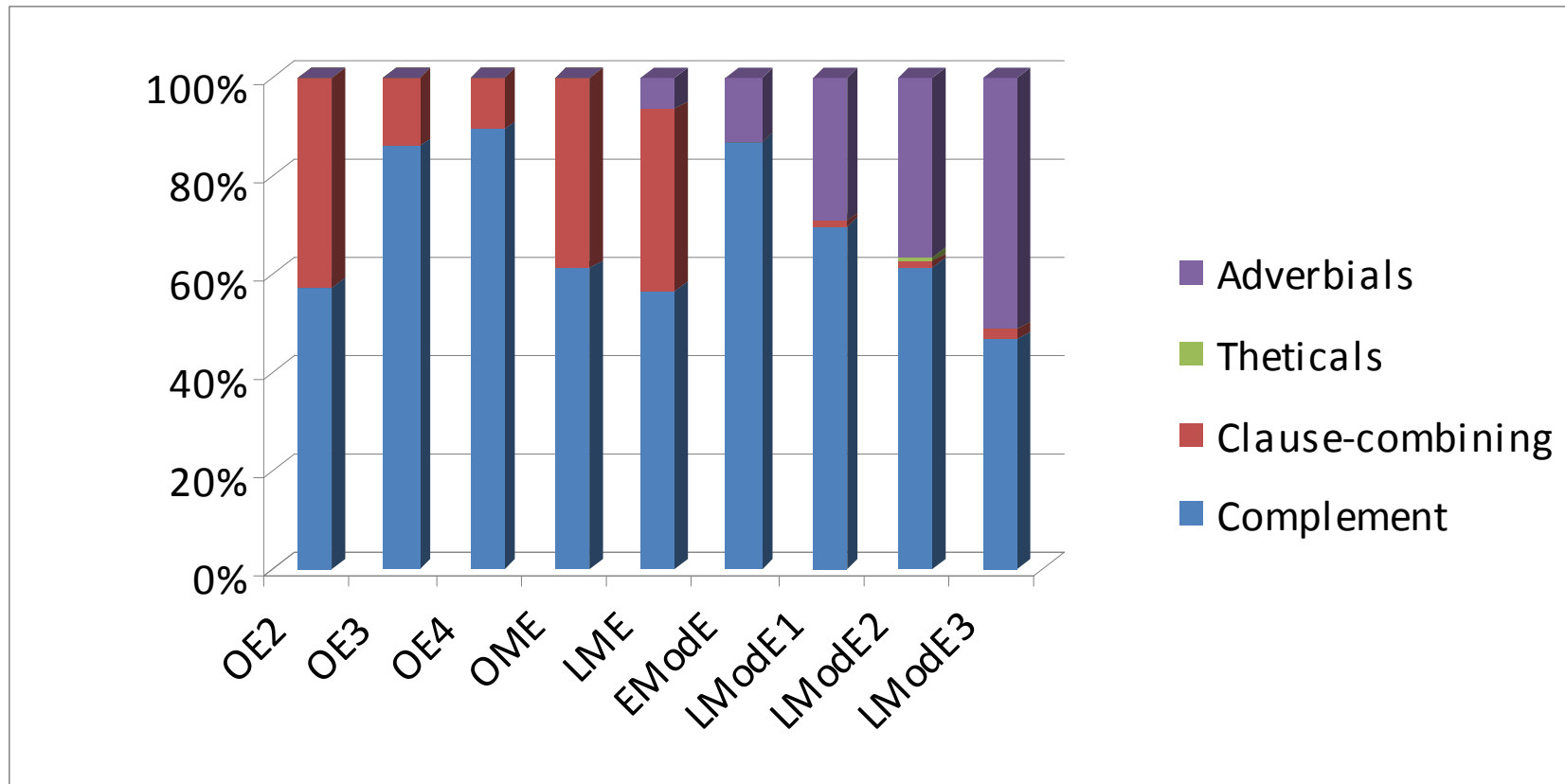
- hypotactic

*As opposition has the first effect, and facility the second, no wonder the mind, in certain dispositions, desires the former, and is averse to the latter.* (1710-1780)

# Developments Middle and Modern English

- like clause combining patterns, adverbials can not only qualify the *following proposition* (like extraposition construction)
- but also *introduce justification*  
*his heart's only half in his profession since he and Julia swore their oath; and* ***no wonder***,--*he made something his own that won't go under lock and key* (1710-1780)
- → adverbials take over 'proportional' share of clause combining patterns within mirative constructions

# Developments Middle and Modern English





Synchronic situation

# Situation in Present Day English

- sample (500 of which 481 mirative tokens) extracted on *no wonder* only
- reveals proportions continuing Late Modern English trends
- ‘extraposition’: 352 (73 %) (of which only 10 elliptical)
- intrasentential parataxis: 6 (1.25 %)
- intersentential parataxis: 7 (1.5%)
- thetical: 3 (0.75 %)
- adverbial: 113 (23.5 %)



## 4. Conclusion



## 4. Conclusion

- specialization for **negation** key factor in
- 1) delexicalization
  - uses with **PPI** less delexicalized
  - Full mycel wundor hit wæs þæt þæt mæden gebær cild þe næfre nahte burh hæmedþing weres gemanan* (950-1050)
  - mirative meaning uses with **NPI** 'not surprising' (Simon-Vandenberg & Aijmer 2007: 37) diachronically stable
- 2) constructional crystallization: diachronically strong association **NPI** with
  - routinization of *it is no wonder that*
- 3) rhetorical strategies
  - **PPI**: does not need justification
  - **NPI**: justification either pragmatically implied or (mostly) expressed

## 4. Conclusion

- rhetorical strategy with elements **N**PI-mirative marker, **justification** and proposition is **driving factor** (Waltereit 2012)
- very clear in e.g.
- early emergence of paratactic pattern

*ealle men hæfdon gelicne fruman Nis þæt nan wundor, forþam þe an God is fæder* (YCOE)

- and its later distributional replacement by adverbials

*his wife was an alcoholic, and **no wonder**, if she knew what kind of man he was.* (WB)

- specifics to be investigated in further research

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